WITK

The Spark Gap

December 1981

Book VII Vol XII

Official Journal of the Wellesley Amateur Radio Society

WCVB TOUR

by Nels Anderson, K1UR

On Monday, November 16, we were treated to a guided tour of the WCVB Channel 5 studios by Dave Underhill, an engineer there, who also spoke at our May 21 meeting. The tour, which lasted close to two hours, included a live view of the end of the 6:00 pm news broadcast, a close-up tour of the station's two studios once they were not in use, the control rooms, editing rooms, network switching equipment, and just about everything else there was to see at the station. The complexity of the equipment was mind-boggling even to the technically sophisticated group of hams on the tour.

After the main tour, a portion of our group went to the Channel 5 transmitter to see the actual RF portion of the station, which is actually a very small part of the operation.

The Wellesley Amateur Radio Society extends its thanks to Dave Underhill and all of WCVB for this chance to see how the pros operate. □

MESSAGE FAIR

As always, December is the month of the Natick Mall Message Fair. The length of this event has been cut back this year to four days, from Thursday, December 10, through Sunday, December 13. This will make it easier on all the participants and should not lessen our business much as we have found in the past that there are many fewer shoppers at the beginning of the week.

To make this event a success, many people are needed. People are needed to take messages from the public, send them out over the air, demonstrate equipment and in general promote the world of Amateur Radio. With something like 800 messages expected, plus all the other goings on, there will be no lack of things to do!

This is a very important opportunity to promote Amateur Radio and our best effort is required. If you can help out during any portion of the four days, please plan on doing so. To sign up, contact any of the club officers or just come down when you can. Help will also be needed for setting up and taking down the equipment. Take down is usually done right after shutting down Sunday night, but the times for setting up are not set yet because of the new operating schedule. If you can help here, again please contact one of the club officers.

This is our biggest event of the year and is not to be missed! Plan now to spend some time at the Natick Mall, December 10 through 13.

Though there will be no regular meetings during December, there will be a Natick Mall Message Fair planning meeting on Thursday, December 3, at 7:30 pm. If you are interested in the Natick Mall operation, plan on being there that evening if possible. Think about what equipment you have available for use at the mall and also any other items that would be of interest to the general public. □

MEETINGS THIS MONTH:

None. See you all at the Natick Mall Message Fair, December 10th through December 13th, 1981.

"timeout!"

By Mike Adlerstein, K1FB

We may be on the verge of seeing the widespread adaptation of a brand new use for Amateur Radio--it's called teleconferencing. It's a way of holding a meeting of the minds on the air. It's a cross between a broadcast news conference and a call in talk show.

A perfect example is the teleconference being sponsored jointly be the Long Island Mobile Amateur Radio Club (LIMARC) and the Communication Technology subsection of the International Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), Long Island, New York, Chapter.

Broadcasts of guest speakers, experts in their fields, will be made on 2 meter FM. Questions will be asked by hams on frequency or by non-hams over a call-in phone patch.

The possible uses for this type of interactive, educational network are vast. Others, particularly in the New York City area, have utilized Amateur television in a similar interactive mode via well places repeaters.

Perhaps someone in our area would like to sponser a teleconference--just ask your local repeater group. □

Wonder Abouts...

Wondering what happened to that 450 MHz repeater unit that was donated to the club some time ago? Well, Dave Curry, K1TK, and Dave Kent, N2AWG, have been working on it out in Worcester and, with a set of duplexers they have, have it on the air at times out there on 444.6/449.6 MHz.

In addition to operating the unit as a repeater, on November 17 they linked it with the 63/03 repeater, in effect giving W1TKZ/R a remote input in Worcester. The link is very simply done by having the 450 repeater at a high spot in Worcester and having a 2 meter rig connected to it operating on 63/03 which then accesses W1TKZ/R. This kind of feature may well become a permanent part of 63/03 in the future as K1TK adds further control circuitry to it and the 10 GHz Gunnplexer link between the transmit and receive sites. □

OFFICIAL BULLETIN

Nr 139, dated November 13, 1981:

At an open meeting of the Federal Communications Commission on Thursday, November 12, the Commissioners decided to terminate PR Docket 80-729, the so called Plain Language Rewrite of the Amateur Rules, with no action. The familiar Part 97 remains in force. □

hr REPORT

An Amateur has been ordered off the air in a bizarre California TVI case where it's turned out the only interference was to a neighbor's illegal subscription TV decoder! The neighbor, irate that his pirate reception was being disturbed, had complained to community authorities. A letter from the city followed, ordering the Amateur to stop operating...but officials are reported to be reconsidering their stand after learning just what it was that the Amateur was bothering. Thanks Westlink.

hr Report, November 6, 1981

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New York City's annual marathon--this year's the largest such marathon in history--used 178 Amateurs for communications. Starting at 3:30 am, they handled over 2000 messages including 85 ambulance calls. The Amateur contribution, result of a six-month organizing effort by WA2DHF, was warmly lauded by the New York Times and ABC-TV. Sharp eyed viewers of ABC's coverage may have spotted WA2DHF riding in the command car with a hand-held. Congratulations to all, particularly Steve. Thanks Westlink.

hr Report, November 6, 1981□

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THE "SPARK GAP" IS A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE WELLESLEY AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY. ITS PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO KEEP ITS MEMBERS ABREAST OF CURRENT HAPPENINGS, F.C.C. RULES & REGULATIONS CHANGES, AND TO LIST EQUIPMENT OFFERED FOR SALE OR TRADE BY MEMBERS. MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE "SPARK GAP" AND MAY SENT THEIR ARTICLES (TYPEWRITTEN IF POSSIBLE) TO THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OR TO THE CLUB ADDRESS.

THE WELLESLEY AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF AMATEUR RADIO THROUGH INSTRUCTION, FELLOWSHIP, DEMONSTRATION, AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF PARTICIPATION. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE SOCIETY IS $8. THE CLUB YEAR RUNS SEPTEMBER 1 TO AUGUST 31. AMATEUR NOVICE AND GENERAL CLASSES ARE CONDUCTED REGULARLY AT NO COST. TO ENROLL IN A CLASS, OR GAIN INFORMATION ABOUT THE SOCIETY IN GENERAL, WRITE:

THE WELLESLEY AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY
324 WASHINGTON STREET
WELLESLEY HILLS, MASS. 02181

Minutes

Meeting of November 5, 1981:

The meeting was opened at 7:37 pm by Vice President Dick Paret, WA1ZLQ.

The secretary's report was read.

The treasurer's report was given, including final results of the flea market. We currently have 39 paid up members.

A letter of thanks was received from the Wellesley Centennial Committee for our help with the recent Country Fair and for the cake parade last spring.

A report was given on the repeater. The receiver power supply has been upgraded and replaced per order of the town of Wellesley on whose property it is located.

Dick Paret, WA1ZLQ, asked for volunteers for the Heartbreak Hill race.

The town has a new Civil Defence director, Steve Black, who is also the new fire chief. Our town emergency plan is due for updating and meetings will be scheduled to look into this.

The meeting was closed at 8:23 pm.□

hr REPORT

S-929, Senator Goldwater's pro-Amateur Radio bill now in the House of Representatives for action, is likely to see extensive revision before it goes to a vote. It's expected to be combined with Rep. Dannemeyer's HR-2203, along with some revisions to the Communications Act recommended to Congress by the Commissioners on September 17. Both the RFI protection and CB "de-licensing provisions are likely to meet strong opposition, but with or without those features the revised bill will still face reconciliation with the Senate after House passage."

Mass. Rep. Markey is one of those who serve on the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Consumer Protection and Finance. Hams can express their interest in this bill to him by writing care of the House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.

hr Report, October 23, 1981□

OFFICERS

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OLDE TIME RADIO

by Albert E. Sonn, W2GC

--from "Spark Gap Times", journal of the OOTC, via HARC "Zero Beat"

Few of you probably remember when you had to take you "ham license test" at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. There were no written questions and you did not have to send any code if I remember rightly.

In 1912 we had to get a license or get off the air. Oh, yes, there were plenty of "wireless bootleggers" who got by for a few years before they were caught or forced into passing a test. But the honest Amateur did have a got at it, and he had to know something practical about wireless.

I had been on the air for years before that in 1907 when we made out our call letters to suit ourselves. Mine at first was AS after my name, later I changed it to DV because about six other hams in and around Newark, N.J. used the letter "D" as sort of a wireless society. We had 2DG, 2DW, 2DH and so on. That was the day that we told the commercial stations and the Navy where to go if we saw fit to jam the air. There were no laws to govern us.

We simply ruled the air waves so as to speak. I remember getting in wrong with the station at Fire Island. The officer there wrote my father a nasty letter so that I please let up on this amateur trash in order that Fire Island could get their traffic through. Station WA at the Waldorf Astoria in New York was so sore about hams out in Jersey filling their traffic with WD at Wilmington, that I, for one, called Pickeril at the key and said, "I'll stay off for you if you promise to let me have a pair of earphones such as he was using". He said he would gladly do anything to please me if I would keep that nasty spark gap still. So the next afternoon I left Stevens Prep at Hoboken, N.J., took the ferry across the Hudson and went up to see the "Big Chief". When he saw me he was busy handling traffic and did not pay attention to me for about ten minutes. I was fascinated at the way he handled traffic without the usual QRM from the rest of our gang. Finally he looked around and said, "Well, what have you in mind? Do you want to become an operator?" I said I wanted more than that, I was 2DV the squirt that he complained about jamming him. "Oh, you are the kid who wants a pair of ear phones?" and at that he took his own head set off his bald head and handed them to me. I told him that I would be a good boy from now on, and I never did jam him again. I was proud to wear those phones and all the D's looked on me with envy because I had something they never could get.

After that licensing came along. I was requested to go over to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and take a test. I did not know what I was in for but I got up some courage from somewhere and made the trip. I was ushered into the big station at NAH. Boy, the stuff they had there! Then a Navy man in charge asked me the usual questions about how long I had been operating wireless and I told him of my hamming experiences with commercial stations and how I wanted to be on the good side of everyone in wireless. He asked me a lot more questions about my experiences with a key and I told him the truth. Then he took me to a small side room filled with dismanteled gear and said, "If you know so much about operating, look over this stuff and get it fixed up to go on the air." Scratching my thick brown hair I was flabbergasted at what to do next. I saw some bare wires which were not connected to anything so I decided to connect them together again. This accomplished I felt better. I called the officer who was really the operator of NAH. He said, "Well sonny, you think you got it going allright and it won't blow any fuses?" All I could say was to go ahead and close the circuit. To this day I cannot say what I did, but I must have done something right. The generator whirred and the meters showed progress. I stood back, "Press the key" the officer said. I did and there was a loud spark between electrodes in the gap. I never heard anything so loud. There was ozone all over the small room. I had made it

work. The officer turned to me and said, "You'll do sonny, many flunk that kind of test. How did you learn all that stuff?" I told him I replaced the batteries for our door bell and had been an Amateur setting up my own station without help.

My license came in a few days and I had to change my call from DV to 2GC, I was the envy of all the young who were still in the pre-dawn licensing area.

We, I am W2GC since 1912 and kept the license going with the same call ever since. If you don't believe it just look in the 1912 call letter book and see. □

CHUCKLE KORNER

by Pete Bradley, N1ADX

Ham radio means a lot of different things to different people. For some it's the lure of far distant places, rag-chewing with a neighbor or working with electronic equipment. I'm interested in using Amateur Radio for experimental purposes. Here are the results of a recent experiment.

To get a new call-sign, I decided to move my radio station (and family, etc.) to a new QTH one mile from the original location. This is the first of a series of moves. Preliminary preparations should include: hire a truck, find all manuals, label boxes (tubes, tools, resistors, etc.) and take the wirecutters. If I had done any of these things the experiment would have been much less interesting.

If you are planning a similar move try to avoid becoming entangled in an 80 meter inverted vee while you are thirty feet up. Don't try to use the same antenna again...start from scratch.

All of the radio equipment had been mounted on a shelf with the wires hidden behind. Also, each box had a wire soldered to a grounding point...remove these first...I didn't. By the time that the spaghetti was unravelled my XYL had moved the furniture so I could get all the equipment into the truck. At the new QTH the grounding and new 40 and 80 meter dipoles took up the rest of the day.

Next day, my wife decided to decorate the new house leaving me free to try out the new antennas. My experience indicates that the first QSO could be as follows:

"CQ de N1ADX K"

"N1ADX de CT9ABC AR"

"CT9ABC de N1ADX - I'm at a new QTH In two minutes from now at least three tubes will go in my rig - That is if the new antenna doens't blow done first - KN"

"N1ADX de CT9ABC - I know just how you feel Pete - I just moved here from ...crackle...pop...hiss..."

"CT9ABC de N1ADX SK"

P.S. I really did burn out two tubes on the first QSO at my new QTH! □

hr REPORT

OSCAR 9 is working fine following the resolution of the command problems apparent immediately after launch. The 145.825 MHz beacon signal is very strong, full quieting on a hand-held with a rubber ducky during mid-afternoon passes. Telemetry indicates the magnetometer and radiation counters have been turned on, and it's likely checkout procedures will be completed by mid-November.

OSCAR 9 orbital predictions that appear in November QST were based on very early (and inaccurate) data, so should not be used to predict its location.

hr Report, November 6, 1981

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Availability of the new 10 MHz band looks farther and farther away. First, the WARC treaty hasn't yet been ratified by the Senate, and, though that could happen soon, until it does there'll be little further FCC action on new allocations. When those new allocations do become official, by revision of Part 2 of the FCC Rules, U.S. Amateurs will still face a rule-making proceeding to determine how the band will be used.

hr Report, October 23, 1981□

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WELLESLEY AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

324 Washington Street
Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts 02181

Natick Mall Message Fair
December 10 through 13

FIRST CLASS MAIL